9) Resignation of the President/Member to become effective only on acceptance, thereby ensuring that continuity of the functioning of the court is not affected.

10) Provision for continuing the proceeding from the stage where the case was last heard by the previous Member instead of starting *de novo* proceedings, where applicable.

11) Sitting Judge of the High Court to preside in meetings of the Selection Committee for selection of Members of State Commission as well as President and Members of District Fora, when President of the State Commission is absent for any reason.

12) Provision for reappointment of Presidents and Members of consumer fora having good track record so as to utilize their expertise.

(iii) State Governments have been requested from time to time not to allow the consumer fora to remain non-functional as also to provide adequate facilities.

(iv) NCDRC as well as Department of Consumer Affairs hold regular meetings/Conferences with Presidents of State Commissions and Secretaries in charge of Consumer Affairs of States/UTs to monitor and review the functioning of Consumer Fora in the country.

Task Force on drug price control

*55. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether present price control policy for drugs is blocking entry of new drugs and PM's Task Force on drugs has recommended fixing a ceiling on prices, which could be flexible and linked to wholesale price index;

(b) whether this Task Force headed by Shri Pronab Sen was set up to look into ways to make drugs available at reasonable prices;

(c) whether it has already submitted its recommendations to his Ministry;

(d) if so, the details thereof and how many of the recommendations have been accepted; and

(e) the steps being taken to implement them?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (e) As per present price control policy, the 74 bulk drugs specified in the First Schedule of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 95) and the formulations based thereon are under price control. Their prices are fixed/revised by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) in accordance with the provisions of the DPCO, 95. There has been no instance in the notice of this Department, where the entry of the new drugs is being blocked by present price control policy.

A Task Force under the Chairmanship of Dr. Pronab Sen, Principal Adviser, Planning Commission was constituted to explore options other than price control to make available life saving drugs at reasonable prices. The Task Force has submitted its report to the Government on the 20th September, 2005. Some of the salient recommendations of Task Force are, that Price Controls should be imposed on the 'essentiality' of the drug and not on the basis of turnover and it should be applied only to formulations and not to bulk drugs. Some of the other major recommendations of Task Force are to promote generic drugs, to encourage public health facilities, to revive the Public Sector Enterprises in the manufacture of drugs, to provide fiscal incentives in R&D activities in drugs, to provide financial support for implementation of Schedule M of Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, to enact Drugs and Therapeutics (Regulation) Act, to establish a National Authority on Drugs and Therapeutics (NADT), to establish price negotiation process for new patented drugs, to streamline the bulk procurement regime, to exempt the excise duty, customs duty and other levies on cancer and anti HIV/AIDS drugs, to establish the State Illness Funds in the States/Union Territories for BPL families, to reduce the excise duty on drugs from 16 to 8%, to enhance the exemption limit of SSI units from Rs. 1 crore to Rs. 5 crores, to establish a Settlement Commission which is authorized to settle the disputed overcharged amount from the pharma companies.

The Government in consultation with various stakeholders is examining the recommendations of the Task Force. Based on this a new Pharmaceutical Policy is likely to be announced shortly.

Losses of Railways

*56. PROF.ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRI RAASHID ALVI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways have lost nearly Rs. 2000 crores over the delay in using recycled scrap to manufacture wheels;

(b) whether during 2004-05 Budget it had been promised that 1 million tonnes of scrap that is generated each year would no longer be sold but would be recycled to make wheels in the factory;

(c) whether due to non-implementation of this decision Railways have incurred a loss of Rs. 2000 crores; and

(d) if so, the main reasons for delay and what time a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. However, the Budget pronouncement expressed concern about mal-practices in scrap sales. Therefore, it was decided to explore the possibilities of in-house utilization of scrap by recycling it, instead of selling it to outside parties, subject to detailed examination of the logistics, cost benefit analysis etc.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Research on elimination of pesticides

*57. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:
SHRI VIJAYJ. DARDA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware the farmers in Penta Srirampuram in Andhra Pradesh have managed to eliminate pesticides from their rice crop by following a three-step procedure as evolved by their agricultural officer;